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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General McGraw Announces New Settlement, Penalties for Publishers Clearing House

CHARLESTON – West Virginia Attorney General Darrell McGraw, together with the legal officers of 33 other states and the District of Columbia, has reached an agreement with Publishers Clearing House (PCH) of Port Washington, NY, that directs the sweepstakes company to take new action to halt deceptive advertising in its sweepstakes promotions. The agreement also requires PCH to pay \$3.5 million to cover the cost of the states' investigation.

[Click Here to View the Court Order](#)

PCH agreed to the supplemental consent judgment, filed today in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County, that modifies the terms of a court order filed here in 2001. That order required PCH to stop promotions that could lead consumers to believe their chances of winning a prize would be increased by purchasing merchandise from the company.

Responding to allegations that PCH was not complying with the 2001 court order, the states' recent investigation showed that consumers were still confused by the nature and language of some of the company's sweepstakes promotional mailings.

Under the original court order, PCH was required to survey consumers who spent more than a certain amount of money to determine whether they were misled by PCH's sweepstakes mailings. If a consumer was generally confused or disoriented by the solicitations, believed that buying would increase his or her chances of winning, or was making excessive purchases in relation to his or her needs, the company agreed to stop sending its mailings to that individual.

The new court order includes additional requirements to help ensure that consumers are not further misled or confused by the company's sweepstakes promotions. The new terms also greatly increase the number of consumers who will be surveyed to ensure their understanding that purchasing merchandise does not increase their chances of winning a sweepstakes prize.

One West Virginia resident learned only after his mother's death that she had been charged hundreds of dollars for merchandise while entering PCH sweepstakes.

Attorney General Darrell McGraw advises, "If you have a family member who is spending more money than he or she can afford on PCH's sweepstakes, or who believes that buying merchandise will increase the chances of winning the big prize, send my office a written complaint and we can get the sweepstakes mailing stopped."

Consumers who have fallen victim to sweepstakes offers can contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at www.wvago.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-368-8808. For regular consumer news updates, follow the AGO on Facebook and Twitter.

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